

Leclerc, Jacques Philippe

Jacques Philippe Leclerc, b. Nov. 22, 1902, d. Nov. 28, 1947, became famous as a commander of Free French forces in World War II. His real name was Philippe, vicomte de Hautecloque, but he adopted the alias Leclerc during the war. Trained at Saint Cyr Military Academy, he escaped from Vichy France in 1940 and took command of Free French forces in Africa. In December 1942-January 1943 he led troops overland from Lake Chad to Tripoli to take part in the Tunisian campaign. Leclerc commanded French troops in the 1944 Normandy Invasion and led the first division into Paris. Assigned to Indo-China in 1945, he soon resigned, frustrated by inadequate government support for his operations against the Viet Minh. On tour as inspector-general of the French armies in North Africa, Leclerc died in an air accident in Algeria.

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Bibliography: Aron, Robert, France Reborn: The History of the Liberation (1964); Maule, Henry, Out of the Sand (1966).